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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF NIGER (GON) PRESIDENT TANDJA HOSTS THE NIGER BASIN AUTHORITY HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT SUMMIT

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**¶1.** Summary. On April 30, 2008, GON President Mamadou Tandja hosted the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) Eighth Heads of State and Government (HOSG) Summit (much of it held behind closed doors) in Niamey. Three presidents (Benin, Chad and Mali), a prime minister (Burkina Faso), senior government officials from two member states (Nigeria and Guinea) and France, representation from the governments of Cameroon and Cote D'Ivoire and the World Bank headed delegations to the Summit. GON cabinet ministers, diplomatic corps, traditional chiefs, non-governmental organization representatives and members of civil society attended the opening ceremony. Tandja announced a June 23, 2008 donors' roundtable to take place in Niamey to secure needed funding for a priority five-year plan (2008-2012), the first of four five-year plans for the period 2008-2027. He called for acceleration of work on the Taoussa and Kandadji dam projects, respectively, in Mali and Niger. Tandja closed the summit with the announcement that Government of Nigeria President Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua would assume the NBA Presidency for the next two years and that the next HOSG Summit would be scheduled to take place during the first half of year 2010 in Nigeria. Beyond the Summit, the French Development Agency and Islamic Development Bank signed substantial assistance packages for water projects in Niger. End summary.

**¶2.** On April 30, GON President Tandja welcomed counterparts and other visiting officials to the Eighth HOSG Summit in Niamey. He expressed gratitude to partner nations and partner organizations for their support in implementing NBA projects. Senior officials participating in the meeting included Benin President Dr. Boni Yayi, Mali President Amadou Toumani Toure, Chad President Idriss Deby Itno, Burkina Faso Prime Minister Tertius Zongo, Nigeria Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources Demola Seriki, Guinean Minister of Energy and Water Affairs Ninaga Komata Goumou, Government of France (GOF) Secretary of State for the Francophonie Alain Joyandet and World Bank Director for the Department of Sustainable Development Inger Anderson.

**¶3.** Tandja remarked that the massive attendance at the Summit was a mark of friendship for Niger and a mark of confidence in the new path being charted by the NBA membership. Tandja acknowledged the presence of GOF Francophonie Secretary Alain Joyandet (as the personal representative of French President Nicholas Sarkozy) and the following institutions: World Bank (WB), African Development Bank (ADB), Islamic Development Bank, West African Development Bank, West African Economic and Monetary Union, African Union, European Union, Economic Community of West African States, Canadian Agency for International Development, United Nations Executive Secretariat for the Fight Against Desertification, Executive Secretariat for the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, World Meteorological Organization, Saudi Development Fund, U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization and

the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD).

¶4. Summarizing concerns about the basin, he noted that over the course of the past 40 years the Niger River basin has seen reductions of water flow ranging from 20 to 55 percent and has suffered decreases in rainfall from 20 to 30 percent. He attributed both phenomena to climate change and demographic pressure. He noted the increased level of silt, invasive plant life (notably water hyacinth) and other menaces to the ecosystem and local populations. He stated that nations sharing the basin have taken individual initiatives to preserve the basin as a natural resource, but that such initiatives have not succeeded in guaranteeing the effective exploitation of basin resources, making the challenges and issues related to development of the basin that much more critical. He cited as challenges/issues: poverty reduction, improving quality of life, protection of the environment and ecosystems, food security, sustainable and equitable use of water resources, and fair distribution of profits.

¶5. Tandja emphasized that the NBA member states' "shared vision" and 8th Summit work require review and approval of a 2008-2027 investment program and a Water Charter to guarantee equitable, peaceful and sustainable use of basin resources. He said the proposed investment program, in line with the Action Plan for Sustainable Development of the Niger Basin, is structured around four five-year plans amounting to a global need of 3.645 billion FCFA (approximately 8.67 billion USD). (Note: The exchange rate used is 420 FCFA = 1 USD. End note.) He said the first five-year plan would be presented at a June 23 donors' roundtable in Niamey and projected the funding needed to execute the plan at 905 billion FCFA (approximately 2.15 billion USD). He reported a shortfall of 565 billion FCFA (approximately 1.32 billion USD). He stressed that while basin countries need to once again turn to donor partners for financial assistance, the basin countries must also work on their own efforts to advance basin initiatives. He urged basin states to

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make regular payments of dues to the NBA Executive Secretariat, but noted that measures need to be taken to determine assessments according to the realities of the moment.

¶6. Tandja named ongoing regional projects funded by a few partners: Program of Water Resource Development and Sustainable Management of the Niger Basin Ecosystem (WB), Program to Fight Against Silt in the Niger Basin (ADB), Project to Reverse Soil and Water Degradation Tendencies in the Niger Basin (WB and World Environment Fund) and Project-Hycos to study basin surface water (GOF and ADB).

¶7. French Francophonie Secretary Joyandet stated at the Summit opening ceremony that the Niger River is an inheritance to bordering countries and populations along the span from Fouta Djalon in Guinea to its mouth at the ocean in Nigeria, a treasure that must be preserved and developed to meet people's current needs and those of their children and grandchildren. He reminded the audience that four years earlier former French President Jacques Chirac at the Paris Conference and in the Declaration of Paris had called for a development program to finalize a "shared vision" for use of the Niger Basin water resources under sustainable and responsible management by the NBA. Joyandet expressed joy that some four years later a NBA Plan of Action and Water Charter would be submitted for validation during the current HOSG Summit. He reiterated that GOF engagement would complement other technical and financial partners' support to Niger Basin countries and their 110 million people that he added is projected to grow to 180 million people over the next 20 years. He confirmed that the GOF will be seated at the donors' roundtable in Niger in June.

(Note: GON Minister of Finance Ali Lamine Zeine and Joyandet, the latter on behalf of the French Development Agency (FDA), signed a 9.825 billion FCFA (approximately 23 million USD) water assistance package. (Note: It was reported that about 3 million USD of the 23 million USD package is for use as part of the GON Food Crisis Cell (CCA) Fund to procure food and/or support food security activities.) Zeine remarked that the assistance would fund potable water projects for 24 villages, eight water towers, six thousand water connections and 25 fountains to serve 90,000 people and improve the quality of

water access to more than 281,000 persons in the targeted areas. Zeine stated the FDA assistance would complement the more than 16 billion FCFA (approximately 38 million USD) provided by the ADB over the last six years. End note.)

¶8. WB Director of Sustainable Development Anderson, on behalf of WB President Robert Zoellick, saluted the NBA's progress since 2002. She said the Niger River Basin is a vital inheritance for West and Central Africa, making it necessary to urgently act on its development. She added that the basin offers enormous opportunities, from hydroelectricity to irrigation, fishing and management of the environment. She offered assurances that development partners remain disposed to continue support to the NBA.

¶9. GON Minister of Water Resources Tassiou Aminou read the final communique at the HOSG Summit closing ceremony. He cited the following decisions:

- a) adoption of a 2008-2027 Niger Basin Investment Program;
- b) adoption of the Niger Basin Water Charter and acceleration of the timetable to put it into effect;
- c) organization of a June 23, 2008 donors' roundtable in Niamey to secure funding for the 2008-2012 Priority Five-Year Plan;
- d) acceleration of work on the Taoussa Dam (Mali) and Kandadji Dam (Niger) projects;
- e) acceleration of studies on sustainable and autonomous funding for the NBA and Executive Secretariat work;
- f) acceleration of the Executive Secretariat and NBA member states' planning for and exploitation of irrigation potential to improve food security along the basin, in synergy with subregional, regional and specialized international organizations;
- g) reinforcement of exchange mechanisms in agricultural production, complementary to work of individual members states; and
- h) the extension of Mohammed Bello Tuga's (from Nigeria) mandate for two years (non-renewable) as NBA Executive Secretary.

¶10. Tandja's remarks at the Summit closing ceremony emphasized that the Niger River is a rich natural resource that offers real opportunity for development in the subregion, provided measures are taken to manage the various threats to the basin. He stressed that human ingenuity is essential to overcome challenges in the basin's development. He urged the NBA Executive Secretary and Technical Committee to persevere in their efforts to generate interest among partners. He said both the human and natural resources of the basin

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must serve as a springboard for durable economic development in the subregion. He commended Mohamed Bello Tuga for his good work that resulted in reelection to another term as NBA Executive Secretary and congratulated Government of Nigeria President Yar'Adua on his election as the new NBA President through year 2010.

Note: On May 6, 2008, Islamic Development Bank Vice President Amadou Cisse signed a 25 billion FCFA (approximately 50 million USD) assistance package for the GON's first phase of the Kandadji Dam project. End note.)

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